



TOWN OF FREETOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MINUTES

Monday, December 16, 2019 - 5:00pm
Council on Aging (Lower Level)
227 Chace Road, East Freetown, MA 02717

2020 JAN 15 AM 8:54

FREETOWN, MASS.
REPORT

5:00 PM **Call to Order** Chairman Charles B. Sullivan calls the meeting to order at 5:03pm. Selectman Lisa A. Pacheco is present; Selectman George L. Grunwald is participating remotely for a portion of the meeting, via video conferencing (only audio is being used for this meeting). Also present: Town Administrator David DeManche and Administrative Assistant Timm McIntosh. The meeting is being recorded by FREECAM and by Mark Rosofsky, 115 Chace Road.

Selectman Grunwald participates remotely in the discussion, and subsequent votes, for agenda items #1, 2, 5 and 9; all votes made with Selectman Grunwald on the line will be made via roll call. The agenda is taken out of order to allow for Selectman Grunwald to take part; these minutes are presented in order of the posted agenda. Selectman Grunwald is on the line from the start of the meeting through approximately 5:44pm.

Board of Selectmen:

1. Snow Season Procedures for the Highway Department

The Highway Surveyor did not give a report to Mr. DeManche about the snowplow meeting, as he said he would, but he indicated to the office that he was unable to use five drivers at the last storm. Mr. Macomber continues to request the three drivers that were late be signed by the Board. Selectman Grunwald says he would go along with that request. Selectman Pacheco asks Thomas Ashley, heavy equipment operator in the Highway Department, but is attending the meeting as a resident, if he feels the department is shorthanded; Mr. Ashley says he'd probably be in favor of the additional help as well. Selectman Sullivan says his issue is that we set a deadline, which we did for a reason. He would recommend adding a bonus for early sign-ups going forward; he also wonders if we add a penalty for those that are late, maybe paying these drivers at last year's rate. He says these drivers were notified in September by the Highway Department. Selectman Pacheco says the Board already voted on an early incentive program for next year. Selectman Grunwald understands but wouldn't go down that route. He will follow the other Board members on this. He believes we should be a little bit flexible here, as we don't know what may happen with people dropping out. Selectman Sullivan wants that report from Mr. Macomber.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to allow for the three drivers at the previous year's rate; motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

2. Lakeville Community Access Media (LakeCAM) Agreement

Selectman Sullivan explains that the current agreement with LakeCAM expires on December 31, 2019, but they have invoiced us for the first payment for 2020, at a higher rate than the 2019 rate. We do not have a justification for this higher rate. Mr. DeManche is looking to the Board for guidance, asking whether or not we want to negotiate and for how long. Selectman Grunwald says he is in favor of exploring this more, but the numbers seem very high to him. Mr. DeManche explains that LakeCAM is

different than FREECAM; LakeCAM handles school meetings and other services, while FREECAM is government only. Selectman Grunwald asks why the schools don't pay for this; Mr. DeManche believes everyone pays a portion. Selectman Sullivan's understanding is that LakeCAM films their own programming and puts those recordings on our local channel. For that, they want this sum of money. Selectman Pacheco explains that she and Mr. DeManche negotiated the rate down for the last agreement and doesn't think it should be going up. She thinks the Chairman and the Town Administrator should talk to them to review this situation and lower the rate. Selectman Grunwald agrees. Selectman Pacheco would like a letter sent and ask to negotiate a contract. Selectman Grunwald would like to see more of a breakdown on what LakeCAM actually does.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Grunwald) to have the Chair and Town Administrator sit down with LakeCAM to get clarification and to start negotiations in the next 30 days.
Motion carries unanimously after a roll call vote.

3. Reserve Fund transfer request for Highway Department for overtime
This transfer request is for \$250, to cover for unexpected overtime.

VOTE: Motion (Pacheco/Sullivan) to forward the request to the Finance Committee; motion carries 2-0, with Selectman Grunwald no longer participating remotely.

4. Ambulance Abatements for November 2019

VOTE: (Pacheco/Sullivan) to approve in the amount of \$74,560.81; motion carries 2-0, with Selectman Grunwald no longer participating remotely.

5. Award Proposal for Department of Public Works Study

Selectman Grunwald has reviewed the proposals, at a cost of \$19,500 for Municipal Resources and \$15,000 for Community Paradigm. Selectman Grunwald notes that is a 25% difference between the two, asking if they are equivalent bids. Selectman Sullivan says they are; Mr. DeManche says they are both based on the same purchase description but reiterates that he has connections to both of these companies so he will not be making a recommendation on this study. Selectman Grunwald asks Mr. DeManche why there might be such a cost difference; Mr. DeManche says he cannot make that distinction, speaks kindly of both companies, and reiterates that they are bidding on the same cost description. Selectman Sullivan says he's read both proposals, and they are mirrors of each other. He says he's also read studies from both these companies for other communities and thinks both would be adequate for our purposes. Selectman Grunwald thinks if that is the case, we should go with the company charging less. Selectman Sullivan asks Selectman Pacheco for her input; she reiterates her position from the Board's last meeting, that both proposals are too costly, and she favors simply making the highway surveyor an appointed position. Selectman Grunwald says this is new to him, he was under the understanding that we needed this study for to be able to do that; Selectman Pacheco says that he is mistaken, saying a Town meeting vote is all that is needed to move to an appointed position, this study is to evaluate bringing together several different entities under one roof. She says that does not make sense to her at this time; Selectman Grunwald understands and agrees. Selectman Grunwald says we should ask to make the position appointed and work on internal policies from there.

Selectman Sullivan would like to clarify that under the Massachusetts General Laws, we have an elected highway surveyor, but there is no section in the law that allows for an appointed highway surveyor; we would be seeking to allow for the appointment of a street superintendent. The voters would need to approve that statute. We can also vote to approve a Board of Public Works, which would be an elected public body, and they would be in charge of hiring the superintendent. Selectman Sullivan's idea was to appoint a director of public works, and we would set those qualifications, and then a Board of Public Works. His feeling was that this study would give them these answers, as we don't fully know this information. He thinks we can offset the cost of this new Director by instituting in-house peer review. He speaks to the value of a Department of Public Works, adding that we are still in fact finding mode currently.

Selectman Grunwald says if we need to get town meeting approval to move to an appointed position first, we should do that first. He thinks this will be a contentious issue, so why waste the money on this study if there is no appetite to fully carry it through? Selectman Sullivan says there are other ways to deal with the current issues, but he wouldn't want to do things piecemeal, he's preferring to do it all at once. He says there are other public works issues that need to be addressed too, not just the current Highway issues. He believes having an outside expert come in would be far more accurate than what we have currently. Selectman Pacheco notes that the last time we proposed this at a Town Meeting, it was defeated by 2 votes. Selectman Sullivan says he voted against it last time and has changed his opinion on the matter. He doesn't think it is appropriate to have a Highway Department under a Highway Surveyor. Selectman Sullivan asks if we want to come up with a roadmap to present to the people or not. He agrees that the sum of money is a bit richer than we thought, but that is the marketplace. Selectman Grunwald maintains that we should go to a Town Meeting first, making it simple for the voters, not complex to confuse everyone, and let that guide the Board.

Selectman Sullivan says the Board will move on for this evening.

6. Town Administrator Performance Review

This agenda item will be skipped for this meeting.

7. Town Administrator's Report

- a. On the land auction, Mr. DeManche says the town received some \$248,000, with the parcels being sold going back on the tax roll. He recognizes Treasurer/Tax Collector Jessica Thomas for her hard work and congratulates her for getting this done.
- b. Mr. DeManche had a meeting today with Scott Fox and Jean Fox of MassDOT, regarding the South Coast Rail project. They intend to go out with contract #1, which is for Assonet and the station site, to be done in the summer. Track work will be done generally 7am-5pm, but potentially some later work if the schedule requires it. Work on 3 culverts will be handled differently, featuring 24/7 work until they are finished. These culverts are in the area of Beechwood Road, Forge/Elm Streets and Brightman's Lumber. MassDOT reported that the station site is filled and graded, calling it station or pad ready. Contract #2 is a much bigger project, also in the summer. A culvert on Braley Road will take 5 days. Track work is involved as well, but not as intensive or disruptive, but will feature some tree clearing. MassDOT has demolished a property at 15 Forge Road, which allows them to reduce the size of the retaining wall that would have been needed in that area. They would ideally like to turn this parcel back

over to the Town. Whenever possible, they are trying to use local contractors. Mr. DeManche says the project appears to be moving forward nicely and we are working with them wherever we can. A more formal team meeting will be put together in the coming months, and we'll be providing as much notice to residents as possible, utilizing all channels we have available to us. Selectman Pacheco would like to see the summer camps in the area kept in the loop as well, as they bus kids in; just because school isn't in session, it doesn't mean there are no buses.

- c. Mr. DeManche has brought in some streetlights to demonstrate the differences to the Board. The two samples he's brought in are from different vendors, but comparable in price. He turns on the lights, blinding all in attendance. He speaks to both lights having timers and sensors built in to reduce the brightness during certain hours. Mr. DeManche would recommend the more natural looking colored lights, similar to ones we are used to. As we get closer to the point of installing, he'd want to talk to public safety to make things more visible in high traffic areas. Mr. Rosofsky speaks to there being a difference in luminosity and wattage, and that the temperature of the light is the color. Mr. DeManche says both models were recommended by his consultant, it's just a matter of preference. He asks the Board to think about this and get back to him. He would also suggest purchasing the module to lower the brightness on a schedule, but this isn't required, but would reduce the energy output as well. Paperwork was sent out to Eversource today to purchase the existing lights, so the ball is now rolling.

8. Police Station Update

Selectman Pacheco says there is nothing new to report since last week. Crews are doing extra work to try to take advantage of good weather currently. She expects more of a report at the Board's next meeting.

Personnel Board:

9. Salaries for employees covered under the General Bylaws, Article 10, Section 9 ("The Personnel Bylaw")

Selectman Sullivan was hoping to discuss this before budget work began. He reads the list of positions the bylaw allows for the Board to set annually. Selectman Grunwald says he doesn't need to be a part of this discussion unless it is controversial. Selectman Pacheco says her understanding is that Executive Assistant Ali Golz will be doing a salary comparison, but we need to know if we want to compare just to local communities or by utilizing equalized values. Selectman Grunwald thinks a comparison makes sense. Motion made by Selectman Sullivan, seconded for discussion by Selectman Grunwald, to raise the salaries for call firefighters by 2% and set the increase annually to the same percentage as the full-time firefighters going forward. Selectman Pacheco says she wasn't aware we'd be voting on percentages tonight; Selectman Grunwald, saying we just said something completely different. He suggests waiting on that vote and seeing what the comparison gives us. Selectman Sullivan says this is just a routine increase. Selectman Pacheco agrees with Selectman Grunwald. The motion is rescinded. This will be on the next agenda, with suggestions from the Board.

10. Appoint Lorraine Noel as Election Worker, effective December 17, 2019

VOTE: Motion (Sullivan/Pacheco) to appoint; motion carries 2-0, with Selectman Grunwald no longer participating remotely.

At 6:01pm, motion (Pacheco/Sullivan) to adjourn; motion carries 2-0, with Selectman Grunwald no longer participating remotely.

Respectfully submitted,



Timm McIntosh,
Administrative Assistant

List of documents/exhibits used in this meeting, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a)

- Letter from Administrative Assistant re: outstanding questions for Snow Season Procedures agenda item
- Letter from Administrative Assistant re: agreement with Lakeville Community Access Media
- Agreement between the Town of Freetown and Lakeville Community Access Media, Inc., dated August 2, 2018
- Invoice for LakeCAM services in 2020, dated December 1, 2019
- Draft Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund, for Highway Department Overtime
- Draft memo from Board of Selectmen to Town Accountant K. Fales re: Ambulance Abatements – Write-Offs for November 2019
- Request for Proposals for a Department of Public Works Study Proposal opening minutes, November 20, 2019
- Letter from Administrative Assistant re: salaries for employees covered under The Personnel Bylaw
- Memo from Town Clerk re: appointment of L. Noel as Election Worker
- Letter of interested from L. Noel re: appointment as Election Worker
- Draft Certificate of Appointment for L. Noel